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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2019
TAGS: [EUN](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GR](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: GREEKS TIGHT-LIPPED ON EU-SYRIA AGREEMENT

REF: SECSTATE 1985

Classified By: A/POLCOUNS JEFFREY HOVENIER. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) DepPolCouns delivered reftel points on the EU-Syria Association Agreement to MFA C1 Directorate for EU External Relations Counselor Katerina Varvarigou. Varvarigou said Greece would take a "balanced approach," which would be in line with the common EU position. An EU working group -- not the GAERC -- would take up the issue later this month, and it would take the U.S. position into consideration. She declined to provide further details on the Greek position going into the working group discussion, despite repeated requests.

12. (C) COMMENT: Greece has good relations with Syria -- described as a "long-standing friendship" by the MFA. Deputy FM Doukas led a trade delegation to Damascus last year, and other high-level contacts are common. While our contacts declined to provide specific information on the Greek position on the EU-Syria Association Agreement, we believe Greece is likely amongst those countries supporting the agreement, given the relative close ties between Athens and Damascus.

SPECKHARD